

BRUTAL VIOLENCE IN THE NAME OF RELIGION, PORTRAYED IN HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY FICTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This article tries to foreground the truth about how brutal was the violence against the losers by the victors in the wars and riots in the past and present in the name of religion. It all started from the Crusade, waged by the Pope Urban II against the Muslim rulers to recapture the Holy city i.e., Jerusalem. Crusade was an historical event. Even much beyond the Crusade, human beings were so cruel and brutal in their attack on their enemies like a predator to its prey in the Stone Age. Many centuries have passed and so many spectacular discoveries have been revealed; yet, new trends of globalization and digitalization have not changed man's aggressive and cruel nature towards the enemy even after one's death. This article will bring out the graphical depiction of the various types of violence being waged against its own species. It not only deals with the description of the violence in the past but also delineates the cruel and brutal violence on minorities during riots and ethnic conflicts in the name of religion.

KEYWORDS: Crusade, Siege War, City Walls, Mutilation, Cannibals Disembowelment, Dismember, Mass Rape, Massacre and Vivisection

INTRODUCTION

Whether it is science or religion, both has not yet been able to give satisfactory interpretation of the origin of humankind. Nevertheless, the available hypotheses deem the human as the supreme species with the unquestionable resistance from any quarters in that aspect. The very title as the Supreme Being, gives him unlimited power over other beings. The supreme beings enjoy this power by killing other beings and making use of them for his survival including eating them alive or dead.

The predatory nature of human genetic has made him more violent and aggressive towards the victims. The way the barbarians and the cannibals executed their power over their victims was not so different from the predators of both the animals and human beings. This nature of savagery continued in the tribal conflicts and the ensuing wars. History is detailed with so many wars and sieges where the victims were just torn apart by various dehumanizing practices such as vivisection, disembowelment, mass rape, public hanging and so on. In this research article I have tried to bring out the salient features of brutal violence in the historical past and the contemporary world in the name of religious conflicts.

The Crusade and the Jihad

Crusade is the title given to the war waged in order to redeem the Holy land from the Muslim rulers. The Pope Urban II started the mission of crusades with the help of the knights and the monks. Later the laymen also joined with

them. They travelled from Europe to Jerusalem. They conquered many cities en route to the Holy land. They were also held siege and defeated by the Turks. However over all they managed to redeem Jerusalem. But at what cost! They lost thousands of people while fighting and walking in the wilderness. They also killed, butchered, raped, slaughtered, disemboweled, dismembered and sometimes became cannibals during their siege and war with the enemies. They even killed their own people those who were deemed as infidels. The dead were also disrespected by throwing their mutilated bodies on the street and to the enemy camp with the spears. The infants were smacked over the wall and smashed into pieces. The fetus from the pregnant women were removed and cut into two or three parts with the help of bayonets. The men were asked to rape their own daughters and sisters and mothers. All kind of cruel and brutalities were practiced like the primitive predators.

The crusaders never felt remorse for what they had done as they were promised heavenly salvation after their death as reward. They were recognized and canonized as saints and martyrs. The religious piety and blind faith in salvation after death had made the people extreme as barbarians and cruel predators. In the name of recapturing the Holy land men had become unholy. It is irony the Holy land witnessed the unholy war of men killing other men.

The word Jihad stands for sacrificing one's life for Islam. The Islam fundamentalists believe that they are rewarded with salvation for sacrificing their lives and destroying those considered as non- believers of their religion. Only one difficult choice was given to the enemies to die or to convert to their religion. In fact, the crusade was started in order to contain Islam's aggression and violence.

Violence and Riots in the Contemporary World

Modern world has witnessed no less violence than the past. After the two World Wars, riots and violence have been occurring unabated. Starting with the Holocaust, millions of Jews were killed in different manners of cruel nature just because they were Jews and refused to believe Christianity and accept Jesus as God. Hitler might have had other reasons to eliminate them but the aggressiveness and brutality in which they had been eliminated is undoubtedly connected to anti- Semitism. The Nazi had anti-Semitism one of their propaganda for their growth and victory in Germany. No words could describe the extreme way the Jews were killed and massacred en masse. They had to dig their own grave to be buried alive. Most of the victims were shot at blank point. They were asked to walk miles and miles without any water and food to die. They were asked to make products like syrups, pillows and candles with the human flesh, skin and hair of their own relatives.

The civil war between Iran and Iraq fall in line with the rift between Sunni and Shiites Muslims. They fought for ten years killing and mutilating each other in the name of religion. The rise of Mujahedeen, Taliban and other groups in Islam lead to the cruelest execution of beheading by slitting the throat of the victims. To increase the intensity of loss, the fundamental groups have recently started to use suicide bombing killing so many people at one point of time. No Muslim country is now free of suicide bombing by the different groups of terrorist out fits. They target even the holy place like mosque. Both the Shiites and Sunni Muslims have terrorist out fits fighting to annihilate other group.

Since every religion faces infighting and disintegration, World War between different religions is very unluckily to happen at least in near future. However the world is not free from civil wars and riots that occur within the territory of a nation. It happens usually where one religious community is majority and there is a presence of a sizeable other community. A slight provocation can lead to riot. The cause of the fight could be of a majority or minority community,

the victims are mostly of minority community. They suffer the most extreme blunt of the violence. The good neighbors turn into enemies and inflict the extreme pain to them. The civil war between Sunni and Shiites in Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and other Arab countries resulted in the most extreme violence of mass raping, killing and other kind of violence. Saddam Hussein had been accused of killing thousands of Kurds and Shiites. Millions of Kurds were buried alive during the regime of Saddam Hussein. In Syria Chemical weapons were used to annihilate the enemy in the extreme form of violence.

Portrayal of Extreme Violence in Contemporary Novels

The contemporary novels have done justice by portraying the brutality of violence more powerfully than any historical books. The novelists have brought the inhuman violence very close to our heart than the historians. The historians give only the actuality of event but the novelists present not only what happened but also how it happened by creating a virtual vision in to it. How one feels when reading the event such as a lady carrying the head of her daughter in the train inside a calabash give burial rite; the women feeding their hungry children with their own defecation and a lady feeding her baby with breast blood instead of milk. I think nothing could match this description of cruelty of starvation created by the majority Muslims to defeat the minority Christian Biafra in the civil war fought in Nigeria recently in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. One will go numbing at the portrayal of violence in the novel *Lajja* especially that of cutting the genital of the Hindu protagonist of the novel by Muslim fanatics. No gods can forgive the parents sacrificing their own daughters to save the honour of their religion. A lady character known as Khusum in the novel *What the Body Remember*, has been sliced into five pieces cutting exactly in the joints in order to save her dead body from being abused in any manner if at all possible. The lady belonged to the Sikh community and they were caught at the cross fire of partition in India. The Muslim women were taken from a village and the beautiful girls of the folk were selected and put inside a dilapidated room and they were raped repeatedly besides burning with butts and biting regularly until they die. The novel *S*. brings tears to the readers of the ghostly crimes meted against the innocent Bosnian women by the Orthodox Christian Serb soldiers during the civil war between the Bosnian Muslims and the majority orthodox Christian Serbians. The nauseating smells of the burning the young and old Bosnian men with the tubes is still haunting the reader's memory. Cutting the limbs of the body and packed and loaded in the train to be sent to India from Pakistan and from India to Pakistan during partition could be the cruelest reality of violence depicted in the novel *The Train to Pakistan*.

CONCLUSIONS

There is similarity between the portrayals of number of causality in history and fiction but history often gives the statistical description of death and injury caused by any violence. Novels on the other hand, not only give the actual death toll but also bring them close to our hearts to feel the intensity of pain experienced by the victims. The root cause of religious conflicts is the blind faith in one's religion and its principles. The political and economical conflicts sow the seed for religious hatred to the extreme. The political authorities exploit the situation in their favour by camouflaging religious alloy. Religious division is the easy target to cause violence and get power as the most of the population in the world belong to a particular religion.

There is no degree of difference in brutality of violence in religious riots and wars than any other wars or riots that display the most extreme form of violence. In fact the Blood-Pain-Death complex of the Stone Age man is very much present in today's riots and wars fought in the name of religion. The height of the extreme violence is the expression of frustration and panic hidden in any individual. Proper understanding of one's aggressive nature could heal the fury of religious monster that has caused so much loss of life on earth.

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